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Report of Youth Correction Authority Act Committee

Minn. L. Rev. Editorial Board

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REPORT OF YOUTH CORRECTION AUTHORITY ACT COMMITTEE

TO THE MINNESOTA STATE BAR ASSOCIATION :

Your Committee recommends :

Recommendation

That a Committee on the Youth Conservation Act be created, and that it be charged with the duty of studying the operation and administration of the act, of consulting and advising with the Youth Conservation Commission concerning the same, of cooperating with other agencies and groups interested in the successful functioning of the act, and of reporting its observations, conclusions and recommendations, if any, to this association.

Report

At the legislative session just concluded the Youth Conservation Act was enacted into law. Minnesota is the second state in the Union to adopt this legislation. The act represents the greatest advance in the field of criminal law since the adoption of the Juvenile Court Act, at the turn of the century. The act adopted originated in the bill prepared by this committee. It was approved by this Association, and was presented to the legislature under the sponsorship of the Association.

The Minnesota State Bar Association may take pride in the fact that it stands alone among state bar associations in securing the enactment of this legislation. At the same time, full recognition and appreciation should be given for the indispensable support and assistance which the bill received from many other organizations and individuals. Within the confines of this report, only the organizations operating on a state-wide level, and coming to the attention of this Committee can be mentioned. These include :

- County Attorney's Association
- Minnesota State Medical Association
- League of Minnesota Municipalities
- Minnesota Federation of Women's Clubs
- Minnesota Junior Chamber of Commerce
- Minnesota Federation of Church Women
- Association of Minnesota Colleges and Universities
- Probate Judges Association
- Mental Hygiene Society
- Association of Applied Psychology
- Minnesota Welfare Conference
- Minnesota Probation and Parole Association
- Minnesota Association of University Women

So many individuals aided in securing the enactment of this legislation, that to name any, risks the omission of others equally deserving of mention. A few carried the major burden of supporting the bill step by step, through its course to enactment. Some special acknowledgment of their efforts should be made, for they spelled the difference between failure and success.

The governor's continuous and vital support is of course well known. Hon. Theodore B. Knudson, recently appointed judge of the Municipal Court of Minneapolis, took a leading part in urging this legislation from the time it was first considered. When a committee was formed to coordinate the legislative efforts of the various organizations interested in the bill, he was named its secretary, and as such, fully measured up to the responsibility entrusted to him in organizing and directing an effective presentation of the matter to the legislature.

John R. Ellingston, special advisor on this subject to the American Law Institute, was of indispensable assistance to the public and to the legislature in clarifying and explaining the practical operation of the act, and in providing first-hand information of the workings of the similar act in California.

Hon. E. J. Ruegamer, president of the Probate Judges Association, with his long experience and recognized knowledge of the problem, carried great weight with members of the legislature in presenting his endorsement of the bill. This was true, also of Hon. Douglas P. Hunt, chairman of the legislative committee of the same association, who actively supported the bill.

Mention should also be made of members of the legislature who carried the burden of securing passage of this bar legislation. The authors in the Senate were Senators Sletvold, who presented the bill on the floor, Welch and Feidt. The authors in the House of Representatives were Messrs. Duth, Hartle, French, Rogosheske, who presented the bill on the floor, and Root. The efforts and the confidence reposed in each of the authors accounted in considerable part for the success that was achieved. Acknowledgment should also be made of the unrelenting support and drive contributed by Representative Carl Wegner on behalf of the bill in the House.

In this, as well as in the previous session, the sponsorship by the president of this association and the chairman of the legislative committee were of a high order. The tact, prestige and ability exhibited by our president, Senator Galvin, and by Gordon Wright, chairman of the Legislative Committee, deserve the gratitude of the association.

Passage of the act should not be the occasion for this association discontinuing its interest in the subject. There still remains the equally important task of securing an effective administration of the act. Many problems will arise and experience may show the need for some changes in the act not now foreseeable. In these respects, the bar can and should be of material assistance. For these reasons the recommendation at the beginning of this report is made. Having assured the public that this act will work, that it provides a more effective instrument for attacking the problem of juvenile delinquency, and for correcting and rehabilitating delinquent youths, the bar must assume some responsibility for seeing that these objectives are realized.

Respectfully submitted,

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